

DRAWING AMENDMENTS

Enclosed is a Replacement Sheet revising Figure 2 of the drawing, and a New Sheet adding Figure 3 to the drawing.

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Official Action dated November 8, 2010, placing this patent application under Final Rejection.

At page 2 of the Official Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings currently on file for this patent application. In response to the drawing objections, enclosed is a Replacement Sheet revising Figure 2 of the drawing, and a New Sheet adding Figure 3 to the drawing.

The Specification has been revised to conform to the revision made to Figure 2 of the drawing, and to identify and discuss new Figure 3 of the drawing.

Applicant respectfully submits that the revisions to the drawings, and the corresponding revision to the Specification, overcome the objection to the drawings raised in the Official Action. Applicant further respectfully requests that the revisions to the drawing and the Specification be entered notwithstanding the final rejection. These revisions do not raise any new issues requiring any further search or consideration by the Patent and Trademark Office, do not affect the scope of the claims currently pending in this patent application, and were made in response to objections to the drawings first raised in the Final Action.

At pages 3 – 6 of the Official Action, the Examiner has objected to the Specification, has objected to claim 1, has rejected claim 1 as containing subject matter not described in the Specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention, and has rejected independent claim 1 as being indefinite. Each of these objections and rejections is based upon the recitation in independent claim 1 that "... said locking device is loaded to retain the rock drilling machine connected to the coupling sleeve only when the rock bolt is disconnected from said coupling sleeve by rotation of said rock drilling machine in a direction for disconnecting said first part of said coupling sleeve from said rock bolt ..." (emphasis added).

Enclosed is a Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.132 in which Mr. Lars Persson, an expert in the field of rock drilling, provides his opinion regarding the Examiner's basis for the objection and rejection of independent claim 1 based upon the aforementioned recitation in the claim. Mr. Persson's opinion is that a person of ordinary skill in the relevant art, rock drilling, would clearly recognize from the disclosure in the original Specification, that the locking device is loaded (locked) to lock the drilling machine to the coupling sleeve only when the drilling device is rotated in a direction to separate the rock bolt from the coupling sleeve, and not during a percussion operation.

Applicant respectfully requests that the objections and rejections based upon the recitation in the claim, that the locking device is loaded (locked) to lock the drilling machine to the coupling sleeve only when the drilling machine is rotated in a direction to separate the rock bolt from the coupling sleeve, and not during a percussion operation, be reconsidered and withdrawn in view of the enclosed Expert Declaration.

Applicant further respectfully requests that the enclosed Expert Declaration be entered and considered notwithstanding the Final Action. The Declaration directly responds to issues first raised by the Examiner in the Final Action, and accordingly could not have been presented earlier in the prosecution. 37 CFR 1.116(e).

At page 6, first paragraph of the Official Action, the Examiner questions a situation in which the rock drilling machine is removed from the coupling sleeve while the rock bolt remains connected to the coupling sleeve. Applicant respectfully submits that this inquiry is not relevant to the scope of independent claim 1. As discussed in the enclosed Expert Declaration, the term "loaded" is equivalent to the term "lock". Accordingly, when the rock drilling machine is removed from the coupling sleeve, it will not be "locked" to the coupling sleeve, and thus the locking device will not be "loaded". Moreover, independent claim 1 expressly recites that the locking device is "loaded" when the drilling machine is rotated in a direction to separate the rock bolt from the coupling sleeve. This can only occur when the drilling machine is connected to the coupling sleeve, and not removed from the coupling sleeve.

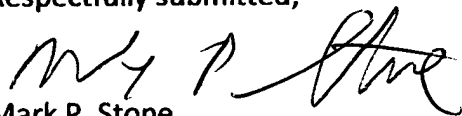
At page 6 of the Official Action, independent claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being obvious over a combination of WO 02/057591 and the Sanderson patent (US Patent No. 1, 994, 792). The rejection of independent claim 1 over the two applied prior art references has been fully discussed at pages 3 – 8 of the Request To Reopen Prosecution And Amendment filed September 15, 2010. Applicant respectfully incorporates by reference herein the specific arguments made in the response filed on September 15, 2010.

Applicant respectfully submits that when all recitations in independent claim 1 are given the patentable consideration to which they are entitled, including the recitation that the locking device is loaded to retain the rock drilling machine connected to the coupling sleeve only when the rock bolt is disconnected from the coupling sleeve by rotation of the rock drilling machine in a direction for disconnecting the coupling sleeve from the rock bolt, it is clear that independent claim 1 defines patentable subject matter over the two applied prior art references, and that there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation in the prior art itself, or within the common knowledge of a person of ordinary skill in the relevant art, to modify the applied references in any manner rendering independent claim 1 obvious.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance, and dependent claim 2 is allowable, at least for the same reasons as parent independent claim 1.

Applicant submits, for the reasons discussed herein and in the Request To Reopen Prosecution And Amendment filed on September 15, 2010, that this patent application is in condition for allowance, and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M P Stone', written in a cursive style.

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